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COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR DEVELOPMENT
First session
12-23 April 1993
Agenda item 12

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITS FIRST SESSION

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Asrat BULBULA (Ethiopia)

Chapter ___

ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development held its first session at United Nations Headquarters from 12 to __ April 1993. The Commission held ___ meetings (1st to ____) and a number of informal meetings.

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development made an opening statement, in which he traced the history of the involvement of the United Nations in the field of science and technology, beginning with the Charter, through the United Nations Conference on the Application of Science and Technology for the Benefit of the Less Developed Countries, held at Geneva in 1963, and the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, held in Vienna in 1979, to the current efforts at restructuring the economic and social sectors of the United Nations, including science and technology. The Vienna Programme of Action, the major outcome of the 1979 Conference, constituted a major turning-point in those efforts. The General Assembly, commemorating the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Vienna Programme of Action, in 1989, reaffirmed its validity, while at the same time expressing disappointment at its implementation. The Assembly, as part of the efforts to revitalize and reinvigorate the economic and social sectors of the United Nations, inter alia, transformed the

Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development and the Advisory Committee on Science and Technology for Development into a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council.

3. The Under-Secretary-General then described the substantive setting for the work of the Commission. Science and technology were the bridge between traditional development and sustainable development and a critical input into enhancing comparative advantages. They had an important role in addressing such global problems as poverty alleviation. At the forefront of the global agenda for the next century would be the human capacity to orchestrate the dynamics of political processes, economic management and technological change in the framework of sustainable development. Current technologies, such as micro electronics and biotechnology, were inherently different from the earlier generation of technologies; they were interdisciplinary and required an integrated and interorganizational approach. The time lag between scientific discoveries, technological advances and commercial application had narrowed dramatically, leaving very little time to grasp their full implications. New materials like polymers, fine ceramics, fibre optics and composites and high temperature superconducting materials were radically altering the dynamics of comparative advantages among nations. Information technologies were altering profoundly the rules of global finance, economics and politics. New frameworks needed to be created to address the generation and application of knowledge for development goals. A basis for intergovernmental discussions would be required in order to avoid an adversarial relationship between scientific and technical opinion and policy makers. Every country was trying to cope with the impact of emerging technologies and to put through the right mix of policies and programmes designed to enhance their endogenous capacities and comparative advantages. The Commission should consider how best the United Nations system could play an effective role in this regard.

4. He said that the Commission would be discussing the issue of science and technology for sustainable development under agenda item 6, which would give the Commission an opportunity to integrate its work programme with the follow-up of Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The Commission on Sustainable Development, at its first substantive session, would consider related matters and the outcome of the deliberations of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development would be useful.

5. In conclusion, he said that the Commission, as part of its agenda, would also be considering such important subjects as the contribution of technologies to industrialization, and regional and global integration (the substantive theme), organized coalition of resources for science and technology and, a subject of special importance, system-wide coordination in science and technology.

6. The representative of Colombia, speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77, emphasized the vital importance of science and technology to the developing world. The Group of 77 had consistently supported the activities of the United Nations in the field of science and technology. Because of its multilateral and neutral nature, the United Nations was a particularly significant agent for promoting international cooperation in that core element of development endeavour. The Commission, as

the main multilateral forum for science and technology, was expected to play a key role by providing the Economic and Social Council with crucial substantive elements to increase the impact of the United Nations in development cooperation.

7. In the ongoing discussions on the reform of the Secretariat, the changes proposed in science and technology should meet, at least four criteria: provision of adequate resources; a clearly identifiable supporting unit; provision of adequate senior officials; and clear coordination and division of labour mechanisms, especially in technical cooperation activities and substantive support for intergovernmental machinery. The United Nations must maintain among its functions the promotion of endogenous capacity.

8. The representative of Denmark, speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Economic Community, recalled the fact that the Commission had been created as part of the ongoing process of restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, and hoped that it would be an effective, integral body providing impartial expert advice in the field of science and technology for development. In a rapidly changing world, science and technology played a key role in the improvement of the quality of life and the alleviation of poverty in the context of the promotion of economic growth and sustainable development, particularly in developing countries. The Community and its member States were committed to promoting scientific and technological cooperation to developing countries, and had several related activities, such as its framework programme for research and development, 1990-1994. Like other intergovernmental bodies, the Commission had been requested to integrate relevant parts of Agenda 21 into its work programme and several chapters of Agenda 21 dealt with important science and technology issues. Science and technology were essential tools in mankind's move towards sustainable development. Intensive cooperation between developing countries was required at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development had the potential to ensure that the activities of the United Nations system in that area were coherent, coordinated and compatible with Agenda 21.

9. Several representatives expressed concern that the current restructuring of economic and social sectors of the United Nations, including science and technology, might have the unintended effect of weakening the contribution of the United Nations to that critical subject, particularly at a time when the important role of science and technology in environmental protection was increasingly being recognized. It was felt that enhancing endogenous science and technology building in the developing countries and poverty alleviation should be viewed as being as important as peacemaking and peace-keeping.

B. Attendance

10. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/235, the Commission is composed of 53 States Members of the United Nations, elected by the Economic and Social Council for a term of four years on the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

11. The session was attended by ___ States members of the Commission. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations and for non-member States and representatives of specialized agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations also attended. A list of participants is given in annex I to the present report.

C. Election of officers

12. At its 1st meeting, on 12 April, the Commission elected, by acclamation, Oleg V. Roudenski (Russian Federation) Vice-Chairman. The Vice-Chairman conducted the business as Acting Chairman.

13. At its 6th meeting, on 14 April, the Commission elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: Mikoto Usui (Japan)

Vice-Chairmen: Georges Kint (Belgium)
William Ehlers (Uruguay)

Rapporteur: Asrat Bulbula (Ethiopia)

D. Agenda and organization of work

14. At its 1st meeting, on 12 April, the Commission adopted the provisional agenda contained in document E/CN.16/1993/1, with the addition of an item entitled "Other matters".

15. At the same meeting, the Commission approved the organization of work of the work of the session (see E/CN.16/1993/L.2).

E. Consultations with non-governmental organizations

16. In accordance with rule 76 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council (E/5975/Rev.1), representatives of the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Council made statements under agenda items 3, 4 and 6:

Agenda item 3:

Roster: Sunsat Energy Council

Agenda item 4:

Category II: International Association for Impact Assessment

Agenda item 6:

Category II: International Council of Scientific Unions

Roster: American Society for Engineering Education
Third World Academy of Sciences

Annex I

ATTENDANCE

Members

Antigua and Barbuda:	Lionel A. Hurst, John W. Ashe
Austria:	Bernd M. Rode
Azerbaijan:	Rufat N. Novruzov
Belarus:	Vladimir A. Labounov, Alexei A. Mojoukhov
Belgium:	Georges Kint
Bolivia:	Oscar Serrate Cuéllar, Bárbara Canedo Patiño, Martha Montaño Durán
Brazil:	Adhemar G. Bahadian, Regis P. Arslanian, Ronaldo Costa Filho
Bulgaria:	Valery Jotov
Burundi:	Stanislas Ruzenza
Cape Verde:	Luis Alves
Chile:	Bernabé Santelices González
China:	Shaoqi Wang, Tongchao Jin, Zhong Zhang
Colombia:	Luis Fernando Jaramillo, Clemente Forero, Rafail Ramírez, Hernando Clavijo
Congo:	Désiré Nkounkou, George V. Oko
Costa Rica:	Orlando Morales
Egypt:	Mohamed M. El Halwaqi
Ethiopia:	Asrat Bulbula, Getaneh Yimene
Germany:	Wolfgang Lehman
Guatemala:	Francis E. Aguilar Hecht, Marco A. Palacios López
India:	Mohammad H. Ansari, T. P. Sreenivasan, J. Dhar, Nikhil Seth
Jamaica:	Arnoldo Ventura

Japan:	Mikoto Usui
Jordan:	Fakhruddin Daghestani
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya:	Taher A. Jehaimi, Ali S. Akashi
Malawi:	
Malaysia:	Mohd. Hassan Nordin, Mohd. Mudzakir Sinon
Malta:	Leslie Agius
Marshall Islands:	Daniel C. Smith, Carl L. Heine, Lance E. Laack
Mexico:	Feliciano Sánchez, José Robles, Patricia A. Belmar
Morocco:	Abdallah El Masslout, Ahmed Amaziane
Netherlands:	J. G. Waardenburg, A. Hamburger, K. Rade
Niger:	Suzanne Maikarfi
Nigeria:	
Pakistan:	Hilal A. Raza
Philippines:	William J. Padolina, Narcisa L. Escaler, Ronald B. Allarey, José Lino B. Guerrero
Romania:	Georges Matache, Ioan Barac
Russian Federation:	Oleg Roudenski
Saudi Arabia:	Mansour Al Malik
Spain:	Julio Montes, Rafael Fernandez Pita, Ana Menendez
Togo:	Messanvi Gbeassor
Uganda:	Stephen P. Kagoda
Ukraine:	Serguiy L. Yampolsky, Igor V. Goumenny
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:	C. H. G. Oldham
United Republic of Tanzania:*	

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* Not represented at the session.

United States of America: John A. Daly, Edward Marks, Howard Minners, Benjamin A. Bergmann, Gwendolyn Griffith, Ismail Sarsour

Uruguay: William Ehlers

Viet Nam: Le Quy An, Nguyen Minh Thong

States Members of the United Nations represented by observer

Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Ecuador, Haiti, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nicaragua, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia and Venzuela

United Nations

Office for Outer Space Affairs, Economic Commission for Africa, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations University

Specialized agencies

International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Bank, United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Intergovernmental organizations

Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, Commission of the European Communities, Latin American Economic System

Non-governmental organizations

Category I: International Chamber of Commerce

Category II: International Association for Impact Assessment
International Council of Scientific Unions

Roster: American Society for Engineering Education
Sunsat Energy Council
Third World Academy of Sciences
World Federation of Engineering Organizations

Other organizations

With the approval of the Commission, the following organizations attended the session as observers: International Union of Scientific Associations, International Union of Technical Associations, Monomeros Colombo Venezolanos S.A., Société des électriciens et des électroniciens, Western Society of Malacologists, World Engineering Partnership for Sustainable Development

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